

Message Text

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PAGE 01 COLOMB 00315 251225Z
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-08 INR-07 LAB-04
NSAE-00 SIL-01 DODE-00 PA-01 USIA-06 PRS-01 SP-02
/041 W

-----251230Z 036167 /22

R 251200Z JAN 77

FM AMEMBASSY COLOMBO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6601
INFO AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
AMCONSUL MADRAS
AMCONSUL CALCUTTA
AMCONSUL BOMBAY

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, ELAB, CE
SUBJECT: PRIME MINISTER'S STATEMENT ON FOREIGN INVOLVEMENT IN
STRIKES

REF (A) 76 COLOMBO 4726,(NOTAL), (B) 76 COLOMBO 4757 (NOTAL)

1. IN TWO SPEECHES IN HER ELECTORATE JANUARY 23 AND 24,
PRIME MINISTER BANDARANAIKE TOUCHED ON THE SUBJECT OF
FOREIGN INVOLVEMENT IN THE SERIES OF STRIKES THAT HER
GOVERNMENT MANAGED TO END JANUARY 17. EXACTLY WHAT THE
PM SAID IS UNCLEAR--THERE ARE NO DIRECT QUOTES AND
SHE MAY HAVE BEEN SPEAKING EXTEMPORANEOUSLY--BUT THE
DAILY NEWS REPORTED HER AS SAYING THAT SHE WAS AWARE OF
FOREIGN INTERFERENCE IN THE STRIKE. GOVERNMENT RADIO
QUOTED HER AS SAYING THAT THERE WAS SUFFICIENT EVIDENCE
TO SHOW THAT THE STRIKE HAD BEEN INTERNATIONALLY INSPIRED.
HER SPEECH THE FOLLOWING DAY WAS QUITE DIFFERENT. SHE
REFUTED THE PRESS REPORTS OF THE FIRST SPEECH, SAYING
THAT THE REPORTS COULD CREATE THE WRONG INPRESSION.

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PAGE 02 COLOMB 00315 251225Z

WHAT SHE HAD SAID WAS THAT SHE SUSPECTED THAT
FOREIGN INTERFERENCE WAS BEHIND THE STRIKE.

2. BOTH SPEECHES, HER FIRST ONES SINCE THE END
OF THE STRIKE, WERE PRIMARILY INTENDED AS ATTACKS ON
HER DOMESTIC POLITICAL OPPONENTS; SHE ALLUDED TO BOTH
THE RIGHTIST UNITED NATIONAL PARTY AND THE TROTSKYITE

LANKA SAMA SAMAJA PARTY (LSSP). SHE ALSO MADE A
VARIOUSLY-REPORTED ANALOGY TO CHARGES OF FOREIGN
INTERFERENCE IN INDIAN AFFAIRS.

3. IN THE FIRST EDITORIAL COMMENT ON THE PM'S REMARKS,
THE LSSP DAILY JANUARY 25 CALLS THEM AN "ABSURDITY".
THE PAPER REFERS BACK TO A DAILY NEWS EDITORIAL IN THE
MIDST OF THE STRIKE WHICH ALLEGED FOREIGN INVOLVEMENT
AND WHICH WAS QUICKLY DISMISSED BY DEPUTY MINISTER OF
DEFENSE AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS LAKSHMAN JAYAKODY (REFTELS).

4. COMMENT. WHATEVER THE PM ACTUALLY SAID IN HER
FIRST SPEECH, SHE WAS CLEARLY TAKEN ABACK BY THE ALACRITY
WITH WHICH SOME SECTIONS OF THE MEDIA SEIZED ON HER
REFERENCE TO FOREIGN INVOLVEMENT. HER REMARKS THE NEXT
DAY WERE ADMITTEDLY A CLARIFICATION, IF NOT A CORRECTION.
REED

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Message Attributes

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Disposition Approved on Date:
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